

Tetra Tech stands by its work at Hunters Point

By Preston Hopson | May 17, 2018 | Updated: May 18, 2018 8:35am

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Photo: Santiago Mejia / The Chronicle

The Hunters Point Shipyard, Wednesday, April 11, 2018, in San Francisco, Calif.

San Francisco and the Bayview-Hunters Point community deserve to know that Tetra Tech EC's work — assessing and remediating about 20 percent of the Hunters Point Shipyard — was done properly.

Tetra Tech stands by the validity of our work. We believe all concerns can be addressed by our offer to pay for independent testing, which will demonstrate our portions of the shipyard were remediated to the standards established by the U.S. Navy.

Here are six facts about our work at Hunters Point:

1 Our remediation was done properly.

2 This is true despite two rogue employees, who illegally swapped soil, and a subcontractor with New World Technology, who participated in the crime in 2012.

3 These illegal actions were detected by the Navy in 2012.

4 Once detected, Tetra Tech immediately reviewed 100 percent of its work, re-sampled and remediated areas at our own cost.

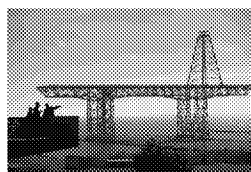
5 Tetra Tech's remediation was then approved in an independent review by the Navy in 2014.

6 The whistle-blower claims are false.

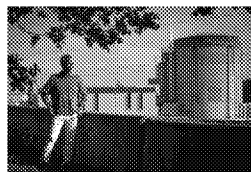
Tetra Tech's primary work, which was the assessment and remediation of low-level radiation, began in 2002. A number of other contractors worked at Hunters Point and also provided remediation services, both radiation and chemical.

Tetra Tech was directed by the Navy to use New World Environmental Inc., doing business as New World Technology, as the "singularly qualified" firm. Our radiological work occurred under the direct supervision and control of New World Technology from 2003 through March 2009 because New World Technology held the license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Tetra Tech implemented its own NRC license in 2009.

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In 2012, the Navy alerted Tetra Tech that some soil samples did not appear consistent to other samples. We determined, with Navy oversight, that 33 areas needed resampling, and of those resampled areas, one-third needed additional remediation, which was completed in early 2013.

We issued an initial report in November 2012 and, after a thorough Navy review, the final public report in April 2014. At that time, we could not figure out why there was a breach of protocol in 2012 that caused these soil samples to not be reflective of the area's soil makeup.

In 2014 the Navy also completed an independent review of our work and found that "The Navy's contractor corrected identified deficient conditions and incorporated additional QC (quality control) steps to avoid recurrence." The report was presented to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the state Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the state Department of Public Health. Despite investigations by us, the Navy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, we didn't know what went wrong.

Now, we know Stephen Rolfe and Justin Hubbard, and New World Technology employee Anthony Smith, were part of a cabal that falsified data.

Smith said in court he falsified data and swapped soil samples — unethical and illegal actions — at the shipyard, where he worked as a radiation control technician with Rolfe and Hubbard. We don't understand why he wasn't charged by the U.S. Justice Department.

We are fully supportive of the actions taken by the Justice Department against Rolfe and Hubbard for falsifying reports. We vehemently reject their activities and have zero tolerance for violations of established protocols and procedures.

The Justice Department also interviewed Tetra Tech EC's most senior managers overseeing these men and no charges were brought against them, as they had no role and no knowledge of the wrongdoing.

All the allegations being made today originate from the 2012 soil sample anomalies. In 2014, Smith labeled himself a whistle-blower and began making the false allegations that are being promoted and causing concern today.

It should be noted that Smith is represented by attorney David Anton, who has been twice suspended by the California State Bar for fabricating evidence and conflict of interest. We think

these facts should make the public look carefully at the claims these men are making, which are only intended to scare the community and enrich themselves through resulting lawsuits.

Lastly, Tetra Tech is a California firm, based in Pasadena. It has 17,000 employees, many in the San Francisco area. After more than 50 years in business, we provide engineering and technical services, including environmental remediation, on more than 60,000 projects worldwide each year. We would never condone the wrongdoing that was done by these three individuals.

We know the work we did at Hunters Point Shipyard is right — and we know that an independent review that we have offered to pay for will set the record straight. We encourage the Navy to accept our offer and begin work immediately.

Preston Hopson is senior vice president and general counsel for Tetra Tech Inc., the parent company of Tetra Tech EC, a provider of consulting, engineering, remediation and construction services worldwide.

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